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DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 20020016729 A1
TITLE: System and method for scheduling events and associated products and services

Summary of Invention Paragraph (4):
[0002] Individual event participants (e.g., end users) and companies are continually faced with trying to accurately schedule events, as well as the provisions of ancillary products and services associated with an event, in a time and cost efficient manner. An event can include, for example, a meeting or other gathering of one or more person for a particular purpose. Ancillary products and services can include, for example, catering, maintenance and repair, security, audio/visual equipment, reprographics, mail room services, concierge, temporary labor, office equipment and supplies, and the like. A substantial business and operating advantage can be gained by a company that can allow end-users to accurately schedule and determine the status of events, and the provisions of ancillary products and/or services associated with the particular event. This can help a company reduce cost and minimize the number of personnel required to schedule and to determine the status of these types of events. For example, such improved scheduling may result in a company having an improved operating position, an improved customer response time, better allocation of resources, and a better economic analysis for staffing and event planning.

Summary of Invention Paragraph (8):
[0006] Various technologies currently exist for centralized event planning, specialty event planning, and calendar scheduling. Some of these conventional technologies leverage the power and speed of a web-based suite of solutions for event planning (e.g., resource oriented) and calendar scheduling (e.g., people oriented). However, these conventional techniques typically include a central point of human input and control, which tend to make these systems inefficient and time consuming. These systems are inefficient in that inputs must be generated by an end-user of the system and these inputs must be provided to a central input point for actual input into the system. Typically, inputs for individual categories are received and inputted separately from one another which leads to further inefficiencies. These processes also require more time to gather and input the information into the system. Some companies use multiple independent systems (e.g., shared services) in order to plan or schedule items. However, these independent systems typically do not communicate or share information between the systems. Also, conflict resolution is not typically included with these systems.

Summary of Invention Paragraph (9):
[0007] For example, one traditional method of planning or scheduling events uses an electronic scheduling program called "EVENTMASTER.TM." and "EVENTMASTER PLUS!.TM." manufactured by CaterMate of Indianapolis, Ind. EVENTMASTER.TM. provides solutions for catering and event management and is designed to make a food service operation more profitable. Its features can be used on a standalone PC or by concurrent networked users.

Summary of Invention Paragraph (10):
[0008] EVENTMASTER.TM. and EVENTMASTER PLUS!.TM. are event management products typically used by the catering, food service, and hospitality industries. With EVENTMASTER.TM., an event planner can typically: generate events, proposals, contracts, and invoices; generate pre-cost and price events and menus; create and review staffing requirements for events and maintain a staff schedule; manage cash flow and event billing, and interface the system's ledger with third party accounting applications; and create a set of management reports that gives the user information on pre-costing, forecasted revenues, critical dates, booking problems, and customized client correspondence templates. EVENTMASTER.TM. also allows integrated food production, menu planning, purchasing, and inventory functions.

Summary of Invention Paragraph (11):
[0009] In addition, these systems can be fully integrated with the CaterMate Suite to provide a solution for the management of food production, menu planning, purchasing, inventory, and event planning. With the CaterMate Suite, an event planner can: generate event orders, proposals, contracts, and invoices; create custom menus; place food orders electronically; track inventories; print key reports; extend recipes; record service actuals; and improve service and reduce costs.

Summary of Invention Paragraph (12):
[0010] However, this method of scheduling has a relative narrow application in that it only covers the operations aspects of event planning. This system only performs one specific task (e.g., one vertical silo) and is therefore a single function solution. EVENTMASTER.TM. and EVENTMASTER PLUS!.TM. do not provide for front-end order entry and customer interfacing, nor do they provide an order management service delivery interface. As in the systems described above, this conventional scheduling system requires a centralized operator or event planner to input event data into the system and to make any changes to events already scheduled within the system. This conventional system also tracks the entry based on a customer identifier and not based on the event itself. Therefore, there is no integration or cross-connection between the event and the services for the event. Also, no commerce is actually transacted from the scheduler system. This scheduler system also does not track customer usage, preferences, buying habits, or patterns. EVENTMASTER.TM. and EVENTMASTER PLUS!.TM. do not schedule services, but rather only schedule fixed resources that are custom built into each version of the scheduler software. In addition, the scheduler system does not provide the user with alternatives, or outside resources, in the event that the fixed resources entered in the database of the scheduler are unavailable. Accordingly, the EVENTMASTER systems are not a commerce solving or commerce generating solution.

Summary of Invention Paragraph (13):
[0011] AMPLITUDE.TM. is another system that leverages the power of the Internet to provide a suite of solutions to automate everyday business processes, including the scheduling of resources. These solutions include web-based solutions for shared resource scheduling, service request automation, alternative workspace management, and event calendaring. This resource scheduling solution improves a user's ability to complete workplace-related tasks, such as scheduling and coordination. In addition, this resource scheduling suite can be incorporated into email outsourcing solutions, such as CRITICALPATH.TM..

Summary of Invention Paragraph (24):
[0021] The present invention is directed to an event-based system and method for enterprise resource planning (ERP) of shared and managed services (e.g., indirect services). The system and method of the present invention can be used by a company to drive the back-end functionality of the company.

Detail Description Paragraph (19):
[0089] Employees involved with the scheduling of events, and products and services associated with an event, require systems and methods that enable them to efficiently and reliably schedule and to determine the status of events, and any ancillary products and services associated with the event, in order to increase employee productivity and reliability. In addition, companies involved with the support of events and the management of products and services associated with an event desire systems and methods for being able to efficiently and accurately acquire, fulfill, determine the status of, and report events and the provisions of ancillary products and services associated with a particular event in order to ensure customer satisfaction and to more effectively manage various related products and points of service. The present invention includes an event-based scheduling system and method that meets these needs and provides other beneficial features, as described more fully herein below.

Detail Description Paragraph (38):
[0108] Referring back to FIG. 1, the event-based scheduling system 1 provides a front end user interface 3 to the event-based scheduling system 1 and also a back end service provider interface 9 which connects the event-based scheduling system 1 to various business partners, such as selected internal 10 or external service providers 11. Preferably, the event-based scheduling system 1 can also communicate between existing applications, such as shown in FIG. 9. As shown in FIG. 9, the event-based scheduling system 1 can preferably be linked to or integrated with other software application systems, including, for example, most conventional operations systems 90, financial systems 91, resource planning systems 92, calendaring systems 93, communications (e.g.,

email) systems 94, data collection and reporting systems 95, and the like.

Detail Description Paragraph (70):
[0140] FIG. 14 shows an exemplary e-commerce integration system that can be used with the event-based scheduling system 1 of the present invention. As shown in FIG. 14, the enabling technology of the present invention preferably includes a server group 50 and the framework 51 to allow the system to bring open standards business to business integration. An event participant can use a computing platform 2 to access the event-based scheduling system 1 through front-end interface 3. The event participant can use server group 50 and the appropriate functionality of the system framework 51 to schedule an event and the provisions to any ancillary products and services associated with the event. Any requests for products and/or services associated with a particular event can be communicated via back-end interface 9 to one or more internal service providers 10 and/or external service provider 11 for fulfillment. Since it is an open standard, the event-based scheduling system 1 can be readably integrated with most conventional resource planning systems, financial systems, calendaring systems, communications (e.g., email) systems, and the like. The open standard architecture of the event-based scheduling system allows multiple outside business partners having conventional systems to be integrated with and interoperable with the event-based scheduling system thereby enabling these service providers having conventional systems to perform service procurement, fulfillment, and reporting.

Detail Description Paragraph (128):
[0198] If the catering request is not outsourced, the process continues at step 220 where the internal planning process is commenced. The internal planning process includes planning the delivery of the catering services at the specified time and location at step 225. The system can also provide for post-catering clean up at step 230 and for the billing and notification of the customer at step 235. The catering request or order is then complete at step 240.

Detail Description Paragraph (130):
[0200] After the vendor acknowledges receipt of the catering request at step 265, the system returns to step 225 for delivery of the catering services. Planning of the post-catering clean-up, step 230, and billing/notification, step 235, can also occur prior to the completion of the catering order at step 240.

Detail Description Paragraph (161):
[0231] If the MRO request will not be outsourced, then the process continues at step 420 where the internal fulfillment planning occurs. The requested services are completed at step 425. The event-based scheduling system 1 then determines whether the services were outsourced at step 430, and if the MRO services were not outsourced, then the system determines whether the rendered services impacted other functions within the organization, at step 435.

Detail Description Paragraph (176):
[0246] If the A/V request will not be outsourced, then the process continues at step 520 where the internal fulfillment planning occurs. The requested services are then delivered at step 525. The requestor/customer is then notified that the A/V support has been delivered, at step 530. The request/order for A/V services is then closed, at step 535.

Detail Description Paragraph (188):
[0258] As stated earlier, access to the event-based scheduling system 1 is preferably limited to authorized personnel only. Each person who desires access to the system may be requested or required to provide personal and business data in order to be granted authorization to access the system or to receive a specific level of access or privileges. Exemplary user attributes that can be used for the event-based scheduling system include:

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